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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/021,250	12/19/2001	Yu-Cheng Lin	LINY3021/EM	7226
23364	7590	06/30/2004	EXAMINER	
BACON & THOMAS, PLLC 625 SLATERS LANE FOURTH FLOOR ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			SINES, BRIAN J	
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
				1743

DATE MAILED: 06/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/021,250	LIN ET AL.
	Examiner Brian J. Sines	Art Unit 1743

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

Claims 1 – 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Yao et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,192,939 B1). Regarding claims 1, 6 – 14, 19 – 24 and 29, Yao et al. teach a pneumatic apparatus and method for use with microfluidic devices for DNA sample processing and analysis. Yao et al. teach that the apparatus comprises: an external servo system; and air gallery structure (13); and a connecting channel (17) contained within a microfluidic reaction module (11) (see col. 2, line 35 – col. 6, line 67; figures 1 & 2). Regarding claim 2 and 15, Yao et al. teach the incorporation of an air compressor (6) and a buffer tank (8) (see col. 4, lines 16 – 27). Regarding claims 3 – 5 and 16 – 18, Yao et al. teach the incorporation of a suction component and an exclusion component (see col. 4, line 49 – col. 5, line 36). The Courts have held that apparatus claims must be structurally distinguishable from the prior art in terms of structure, not function. See *In re Danley*, 120 USPQ 528, 531 (CCPA 1959); and *Hewlett-Packard Co. V. Bausch and Lomb, Inc.*, 15 USPQ2d 1525, 1528 (Fed. Cir. 1990). The Courts have held that the manner of operating an apparatus does not differentiate an apparatus claim from the prior art, if the prior art apparatus teaches all of the structural limitations of the claim. See *Ex Parte Masham*, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (BPAI 1987) (see MPEP § 2114). Regarding claims 25 – 28, as discussed above, Yao et al. teach all of the structure of the apparatus provided in the

claimed method, which merely recites the conventional operation of that apparatus. Regarding process or method claims, a prior art device anticipates a claimed process, if the device carries out the process during normal operation (see MPEP § 2112.02). The Courts have held that when a prior art device is the same as a device described in the specification for carrying out the claimed method, it can be assumed that the device will inherently perform the claimed process. See *In re King*, 801 F.2d 1324, 231 USPQ 136 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In addition, regarding product and apparatus claims, when the structure recited in the reference is substantially identical to that of the claims, claimed properties or functions are presumed to be inherent (see MPEP § 2112.01).

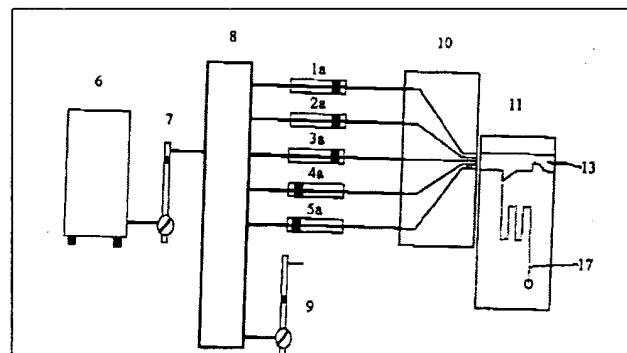


Fig. 1

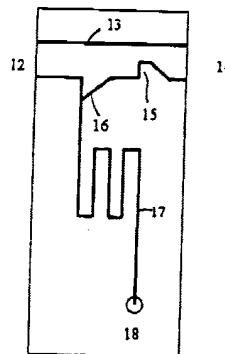


Fig. 2

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Yao teaches a microfluidic apparatus comprising a pneumatic microflow driving element. Caren teaches a microfluidic pumping apparatus.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian J. Sines, Ph.D. whose telephone number is (571) 272-1263. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday (11:30 AM - 8 PM EST).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700